



Connecticut Chapter
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February 17, 2015

**Proposed H.B. No. 6378 AN ACT PROVIDING VETERANS'
PREFERENCES IN THE RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND
HOUSING AUTHORITY PROJECTS.**

Conn-NAHRO is the Connecticut chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials; its membership is comprised of Public Housing Authorities and other individuals and organizations involved in affordable and public housing in Connecticut.

My name is Cathy Branch Stebbins, I'm the executive director of CONN-NAHRO, Connecticut's membership organization for public housing authorities.

We understand the good intentions behind providing a preference to veterans but there are unintended consequences. The consequences of preferences are that you deny another equally needy and equally worthy individual or family access to the same housing.

Public housing authorities witness every kind of person who is in need of affordable housing walk through their front doors. It is very hard to ask any deserving and needy person to wait their turn for affordable housing. We believe that the only fair way to manage the scarce resource of affordable housing is first-come, first-served, unless the housing was originally, specifically developed for a target population that has special and unique needs.

Imagine yourself in their shoes—how do you ask the family with children to wait longer for housing because a veteran just applied? How do you tell the victim of domestic violence to step aside because a disabled person just applied? How do you ask the elderly person to sit tight because a homeless person needs it? What do you say when a family, who is #3 on your waiting list, calls a month later and you have to tell them they are now #6 on the list? Do you tell them it's because someone else is more important than they are?

Given the scarcity of resources in this situation, housing authorities can only support one truth--every human being is equally deserving of decent, safe and affordable housing.